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**JOHN D'ANTONIO, Jr.**  
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**Environment Department Orders Comprehensive Investigation and  
Cleanup of Contamination at Sandia National Laboratories**

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**Environment Department Schedules Public Informational Meetings**

(Santa Fe, NM) –Today the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) issued a draft order to Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) requiring a comprehensive investigation and cleanup of contaminated sites at SNL. The draft order addresses all significant environmental cleanup issues at SNL, including remediation of landfills, ground water and other contaminated sites. This marks the first time the State has set strict schedules for SNL's environmental cleanup work.

“Today's action continues the Department's push to ensure that New Mexico's federal facilities come into compliance with environmental clean up standards,” said Environment Secretary John D'Antonio. “New Mexico's federal facilities have fallen behind those in other states when it comes to funding for environmental remediation. The draft order we issue today should raise the priority of Sandia's environmental funding needs to those in Washington who allocate DOE monies.”

The NMED's draft order is based on a finding that past handling, storage, treatment and disposal of solid or hazardous wastes at SNL may have substantially endangered human health and the environment. The substantial endangerment finding is based on SNL's past waste disposal practices and existing soil and ground water contamination on site. No drinking water wells that are currently used are contaminated.

SNL is DOE-owned and co-operated with Sandia Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Since 1945, SNL has conducted experimental research and development in the fields of nuclear weapons and explosive materials. SNL is located adjacent to and south of Albuquerque, New Mexico, mostly within Kirtland Air Force Base. From approximately 1945 to the present, SNL has generated, treated, stored, disposed of, and otherwise handled solid wastes, hazardous wastes, hazardous waste constituents, and hazardous wastes mixed with radioactive wastes. In some cases, radioactive wastes were mixed with hazardous wastes and in other cases they were disposed of separately. These wastes were disposed of in pits, trenches, landfills, and waste piles throughout SNL. The types of hazardous and solid wastes that have been handled and disposed of include chlorinated and non-chlorinated solvents, high explosives, metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), nitrates, and radionuclides. In several locations, contamination of the regional aquifer, from which many entities including the City of Albuquerque draw drinking water, has occurred.

The NMED issues the draft order under the State Hazardous Waste Act to compel SNL to address the possible health and environmental effects of its past operations. The draft order contains investigation and cleanup requirements, including a schedule for implementation.

The NMED is inviting the public to submit written comments on the draft order during a thirty-day public comment period that starts today. The NMED will issue the final order after considering all written comments. Both the draft order and the administrative record may be reviewed at the NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau located at 2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1, in Santa Fe. Written comments and a copy of the draft order are also available at the NMED website:

<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/HWB/pubnotice.html>

Written comments will be accepted until **October 3, 2002 at 5:00 p.m.**

In order to answer questions from and inform the public about the draft order, the NMED will hold informational meetings in September. The meetings will be held on Tuesday, September 17, and Thursday, September 26, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Loma Linda Community Center, 1700 Yale Blvd. SE, in Albuquerque.

At these meetings NMED personnel will provide information about the order and answer questions to clarify its content. Members of the public may submit to NMED written comments on the draft order at any time during the public comment period, including at the meetings. NMED will issue the final order after considering all written comments.

For additional information, please contact James Bearzi, Chief, NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau, at (505) 428-2512, or Cathy Tyson-Foster, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-2855.

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